The Report Committee for Fu-Hao Chiang
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:

Writing Pedagogy from a Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor:

Corinne P. Crane

Nancy L. Roser

Writing Pedagogy from a Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

by

Fu-Hao Chiang, B.F.A.

Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2013

Dedication

I dedicate this to all my teachers, without whom I would not be where I am today.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the professors in the Foreign Language Education department—Dr. Elaine Horwitz, Dr. Veronica Sardegna, and Dr. Diana Pulido—for giving me the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills needed to become a better second language instructor. I also thank Dr. Nancy Roser for her ongoing support and invaluable feedback on this report. Finally, I am indebted to my advisor, Dr. Corinne Crane, for introducing me to systemic functional linguistics and for mentoring me throughout the writing process.

Abstract

Writing Pedagogy from a Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

Fu-Hao Chiang, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Corinne P. Crane

In recent years, US elementary and secondary education has put more emphasis on advancing students' academic literacy. To address this need, many teachers have looked to systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory to frame writing instruction. Drawing from this literature, this report identifies major pedagogical principles relevant for an English as a foreign language (EFL) instructional context, delineates the linguistic markers characteristic of academic registers, and expands on the existing literature in regards to feedback and error correction. SFL-informed literacy instruction can benefit English language instruction in countries such as South Korea, where learners' writing development has traditionally been neglected. The report begins with a brief overview of systemic functional linguistics, and follows with a review of the literature on SFL-based writing pedagogy. Implications for EFL educational settings are discussed.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

In an article published in the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, Harklau (2002) draws attention to the subsidiary role that writing has occupied in classroom language learning, while positing that it is through writing that learners actually acquire language. In addition, she argues that second language acquisition (SLA) research set in classrooms has often neglected to focus on reading and writing. Since this article's publication, improvements have transpired in regards to literacy practices in American classrooms.

To address students' need to develop their academic reading and writing, American researchers and practitioners have drawn on systemic functional linguistics (SFL), a theory that has seen much success in framing literacy programs in the United Kingdom and, to a greater extent, Australia. Based on Hallidayan functional linguistics, SFL is concerned with the relationship between language and its function in social settings, and highlights the ways that language actively construes social contexts (Colombi & Schleppegrell, 2002; Hyon, 1996). The pedagogy derived from SFL aims to advance literacy in language users, including second and foreign language learning students. This report postulates that this language-based approach to L2[1] learning can positively influence academic literacy[2] instruction in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, and aims to: summarize the major ideas of SFL theory; review the literature on pedagogy grounded in this theoretical framework; and gauge the applicability of these instructional practices to an EFL context.

[1] The terms *second language* and *L2* denote language learning in a language other than one's first language.
[2] This report focuses on writing pedagogy, but acknowledges that writing instruction is usually implemented in tandem with reading instruction. While the term *literacy* is used throughout, the emphasis remains on the writing part of *literacy*.

A MOVEMENT TOWARDS A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE

The publication of Harklau (2002) appeared around the same that the United States passed federal reforms such as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, whose effects impact second language literacy programs in American public schools to this day. According to Darling-Hammond (2006, as cited in Gebhard & Harman, 2011), *NCLB* negatively affected English language learners (ELLs) by widening the achievement gap between them and their native-speaking counterparts. ELLs are relegated to substandard instruction that impede L2 literacy development, all the while being expected to pass high-stakes exams on "content knowledge and proficiency in a wide range of academic disciplines" (p. 46). This lack of attention to literacy in classrooms with ELLs and in SLA research (Harklau, 2002), in addition to the inadequate literacy support given to ELLs (Darling-Hammond, 2006, as cited in Gebhard & Harman, 2011), paint an educational landscape that places the English language learning population at a gross disadvantage.

In recent years, though, US-based applied linguists and educational researchers have made efforts to lessen this achievement gap by adopting what Harklau (2002) proposed in her article: a "modality-sensitive approach" to classroom second language learning and research that not only addresses "literacy as a language learning mode," but also includes a wider range of language registers, e.g., formal and informal (p. 338). SFL, with its view of language as a system of choices for making meaning (Christie & Misson, 1998), equips ELLs with the linguistics resources to make meaning in a range of school-based text types. From an SFL perspective, growth in language ability involves the "expansion of registers" and the "acquisition of genres representing various institutional, educational, and professional settings" (Ryshina-Pankova, 2006, as cited in Yasuda, 2011, p. 112). The acceptance of SFL-based pedagogy, which not only stresses the

development of academic literacy, but also offers instructors models and practices proven to scaffold learning, marks progress towards serving the English as a second language (ESL) students in American public schools.

THE STATE OF L2 WRITING IN SOUTH KOREA

Much of the literature on L2 writing has been centered on research and pedagogy in English-speaking contexts. The last twenty years, though, have seen a growing interest in EFL writing, which has subsequently led to conversations about the difficulties experienced by EFL composition instructors. Leki (2001) discusses these challenges, ranging from everyday obstacles, e.g., large class sizes and time constraints, to challenges of a more ideological nature, e.g., cultural views that undervalues writing. South Korea is one such instructional context that has traditionally placed less importance on EFL composition.

Writing is one of the communicative modalities least attended to in the EFL curriculum of Korean public schools as English language education has primarily been focused on teaching toward tests. The College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), in particular, has an influence so strong that virtually all primary and secondary school English language exams are modeled after the English section of the CSAT (Choi, 2008). Because reading and listening are the focus of both school-based and statewide exams, speaking and writing are often neglected in public school EFL curricula. Recent developments in South Korea, however, offer hope that writing will assume equal weight in English education.

The Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation has developed a new state-administered English proficiency test, the National English Ability Test (NEAT), with

the intent to replace the English section of the CSAT starting in 2016 (Oh, 2013). While the differences between the two exams are many, of major importance is the inclusion of a writing component on the NEAT. A high-stakes English exam that now targets all four skills (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, *and* writing) will inevitably produce a washback effect for educational programs that will include modifications to curriculum and teaching methods (Bachman, 2013; Jin, 2012). Because it is now tested, the importance of writing is further amplified. A looming concern is whether the current educational landscape is prepared to meet the writing demands of students and future exam-takers.

GOALS

The increase in acceptance of writing instruction grounded in SFL theory in Western teaching contexts has generated a rich body of pedagogically-driven research. At the same time, there is a rising need for effective writing instruction in EFL contexts such as South Korea. This paper argues that pedagogy under an SFL framework is especially well-suited to meet the needs of Korean students and examinees. The emphases on language analysis and mastery of school-based genres promote academic reading and writing skills; they also help examinees complete genre-based tasks in school and on assessments. In this report, an overview of SFL theory is provided to ground the literature review of SFL-based writing pedagogy and subsequent discussions. Then, major pedagogical tenets, through an EFL lens, are drawn from the research throughout.

Overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic functional linguistics[3] (SFL) has been used as an analytic and teaching tool to support language learners' literacy development over the past three decades, mostly outside the United States (Harman, 2013). Developed by British-born linguist Michael Halliday, SFL is a grammatical framework that views language as a meaning-making resource and demonstrates how meaning is constructed in certain language choices (Eggins, 1994; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). This meaning-oriented approach to language has grounded sophisticated pedagogies in all forms of language and discourse, and is particularly helpful in framing writing instruction as writing itself requires careful consideration of the meaning potential available to writers. From an SFL perspective, interactants use language to make meaning in various social contexts[4]. In the social context of schooling, students use language to produce a variety of text types, e.g., lab reports, expository essays, narratives, etc. These texts serve as meaningful interactions between writers and readers and represent how individuals use language in order to accomplish a communicative goal. This goal-oriented behavior of putting words on paper takes place "within both a situation and a culture, in relation to which it can be evaluated as appropriate and inappropriate" (Eggins, 1994, p. 29). To illustrate the two different levels of context, culture and situation, an example is provided.

In high schools all across the United States, students are assigned expository essay assignments in their English class. The act of writing an essay on literature is a common occurrence for students in secondary schools, and refers to the *context of*

[3] In literature on SFL theory, the term *systemic functional linguistics* is used interchangeably with *functional linguistics* and *functional grammar*. The terms *functional linguists* and *systemicists* refer to scholars in SFL theory.

[4] This emphasis on the social aspect of language is very different from Americans' traditional view of language (Mohan & Slater, 2006), which has been shaped by the field of psychology, especially via the works of Noam Chomsky, and generative grammarians (Baker, 1995).

culture. This activity is purposeful and meaningful, as framed by the culture. In a Western educational context, using language in this manner (i.e. writing an expository essay) is a culturally appropriate activity. The text generated by the student belongs to a certain *genre*, defined as "a staged, goal-oriented purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of [a certain] culture" (Martin, 1984, p. 25, as cited in Eggins, 1994, p. 26). The essay is expected to begin with an introduction and statement of thesis, proceed with points (likely three) supported with evidence, and then conclude with a reiteration of the thesis statement. These stages make up the expository genre, one of countless genres in which students in school are expected to write (Hyland, 1990).

A second, more focused level of context is the *context of situation*, which both determines the appropriate use of a particular genre, and informs the details of a text's body (Eggins, 1994). The genre of the expository essay, for instance, would be inappropriate for some situations, e.g., at a wedding. Likewise, the language used to communicate one's thoughts is different from the language used with a friend, much like the language used to talk about literature is different from the language used to talk about science, which is similar to how language used in writing is not the same as the language used in speaking. Three main dimensions of a given situation affect language used in the body of a text. They are referred to as *field* (i.e. the ideas in the text), *tenor* (i.e. the position or tone the author takes in relation to the reader and to its contents), and the *mode* (i.e. the way language is delivered). These three aspects combine to describe the *register*, the deeper linguistic elements that function to make the "text effective specifically for the situation in which it is used" (Paugh & Moran, 2013, p. 256). The example high school essay on literature would include content related to literature, such as literary devices (field); be realized in formal language, such as the absence of a first person (tenor); and be written to be read by the English teacher (mode).

The above example has introduced genre and register. To sum, it is genre and register that ultimately inform writers' choice of language. Consequently, changes in either or both would lead writers to adjust their language. This modification of linguistic expression occurs because, from an SFL perspective, language is a systemic resource that gives users flexible "configuration of choices" (Harman, 2013, p. 127). The available options are dependent on the situational and cultural contexts in which the language is being used. Students who lack awareness of register and genre, then, will undoubtedly generate texts that are deemed culturally inappropriate. The goal of classroom instruction informed by SFL theory is to develop learners' awareness of the genre and register dimensions, thus expanding learners' linguistic resources in order for them to make culturally appropriate language choices. Therefore, genre and register occupy a critical role in SFL-based pedagogy, and merits closer examination.

GENRE: A SOCIAL ACTIVITY REALIZED IN LANGUAGE

Martin's (1984, p. 25, as cited in Eggins, 1994, p. 26) definition of genre—"a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture"—is the one most cited by functional linguists. In its truest sense, genre is the social activity that language users engage in to achieve a goal, e.g., purchasing and selling goods, telling a story, and offering advice to readers. However, the term *genre* is used interchangeably with the language instantiated in the interaction, represented in the form of *texts*. Texts that carry out the same or similar social goals share linguistic patterns, and these can be described as *text types* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Therefore, in SFL literature, genre refers to both the socially-constructed activity (e.g., ordering coffee) and the language resulting from the social activity (i.e. text type). Using

the example of an expository essay on literature, it can be understood that the essay serves a social function (genre as a social activity), which is to explain or to convey information (genre as a social activity); and is delivered in the form of a multi-staged written composition (genre as a text type).

Texts produced by language users "vary according to the nature of the contexts they are used in" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 27). Text types eventuate when people of a certain culture have general access to them; it is the language users of this culture that dictate what is appropriate or inappropriate when interacting in a genre. The emphasis on cultural appropriacy is underscored by the premise that members of a specific culture recognize similarities in the texts they frequently use, and are "able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to read, understand, and perhaps write" with relative ease (Hyland, 2007, p. 149). Knowledge of genres, then, can be understood as a form of cultural knowledge. The goal of genre theory is bringing this unspoken knowledge to consciousness in learners, thus boosting their cultural capital[5] (Johns, 2003, p. 201). It is no surprise that genre-based pedagogy derived from SFL theory was first used with disadvantaged students, English language learners, and Aboriginal students in Australian schools, and has since spread to North America to support learners' advanced literacy. In these programs, teachers guide students in learning school-based genres by targeting "how language works to build the genres" (Christie, 1999, p. 761). It is often the case that instructors focus on structural analysis of genres to build students' genre awareness.

Socially recognized ways of using language, or genres, range from everyday activity types (e.g., buying and selling) to literary genres (e.g., autobiographies), and

[5] A concept attributed to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital refers to social advantages (e.g., knowledge, skills, and education) that promote social mobility beyond one's economic means.

from popular written genres (e.g., recipes) to educational genres (e.g., essay writing) (Eggins, 1994; Hyland, 2007). Texts, the representations of social interaction, typically exhibit a series of stages that are established by the genre, and referred to as the *schematic structure*. Genres can consist of few or several stages, depending on the complexity of the social interaction (Eggins, 1994). The high school literature essay, for example, is composed of several parts, or *constituents*. Generally speaking, the essay would have an introduction (beginning), a body (middle), and a conclusion (end). However, SFL theorists favor a functionally-oriented approach to labeling a genre's different stages. Thus, the same essay would include an introduction consisting of background information and a thesis statement, a body consisting of arguments and evidence, and a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the body and reiterates the thesis statement (Hyland, 1990). This preference for labeling a genre's stages based on purpose corresponds to SFL's focus on function, not form. The next step in genre analysis involves examining the sequence of the stages and determining whether each stage is obligatory or optional.

What differentiates a genre from another are the obligatory elements of that particular genre. The stages of a typical expository essay written at the high school level may be represented as:

> Background Information^Thesis Statement^Argument^Evidence^Summary of Evidence^Reiteration of the Thesis Statement

The ^ symbol between stages indicates that the stages are in a fixed order. For instance, the Thesis Statement must precede any Arguments or Evidence given to prove the thesis. If all of the above elements are present in a literature essay, most high school English teachers in the United States would find it acceptable. However, many would find

Background Information unnecessary, especially in a timed setting. Thereby, Background Information can be parenthesized as an optional stage in the expository genre:

(Background Information)^Thesis Statement^Argument^Evidence^Summary of Evidence^Reiteration of the Thesis Statement

The above schematic structure describes the optional and obligatory elements of a high school essay on literature, but it fails to address the fact that most essays are composed of at least three points with supporting evidence. The number of arguments and related supporting evidence, though, is not clearly defined, nor is there a "right" way to order these arguments. Therefore, the Argument and Evidence structure can be represented by:

(Background Information)^Thesis Statement^←{Argument^Evidence}^Summary of Evidence^Reiteration of the Thesis Statement

Here, the ←{X^Y} symbols show that stages X and Y are both recursive in the fixed order of X then Y (Eggins, 1994. p. 40). Of course, each essay that English teachers receive is different. Some essays may even have additional stages previously not mentioned. But all essays are expected to include the necessary components. The obligatory and optional schematic structure elements help to define what constitutes a specific genre. Thus, a genre is "defined in terms of its obligatory elements of schematic structure, and variants of a genre are those texts in which the obligatory schematic structure elements are realized, as well as perhaps some of the optional ones" (Eggins, 1994, p. 41).

Much attention has been paid to the schematic structure of genres because it is in a genre's functional stages that language is examined. In SFL theory, language is viewed as the words and structures speakers use (i.e. lexico-grammar); it is how language gets realized through genres that interest discourse analysts. Across genres, language users' lexico-grammatical choices differ. The words and structures used in essay writing, for

example, are unlike the linguistic realizations in recipes. Similarly, lexico-grammatical choices also differ across schematic stages. Using the previous example of a high school expository essay, it can be expected that the linguistic realizations in the Thesis Statement stage would differ from those in the Argument stage. It is not that the words and structures used in these two stages would be completely different, but it can be expected that the language choices in these two stages would reveal "different configurations of words and structures, different clusterings of patterns" (Eggins, 1994, p. 42). Therefore, it is made apparent that language use is informed by its function.

The above review of genre theory offers theoretical knowledge within the scope of this report. It has been revealed that the term *genre* is defined as social activity among language users, and the language itself used in interaction. Educators working within an SFL framework help learners master writing in genres privileged in schools. This has resulted in genre theory, which aims to build learners' genre awareness through analysis of schematic structures and bring to consciousness the available language choices given to them as suggested by the genre.

REGISTER: THE WAY LANGUAGE IS SHAPED BY SOCIAL CONTEXT

Whereas genre is concerned with how speakers use language in order to fulfill a purpose, register is concerned with the situational context in which the language is being used. Experienced readers would be able to distinguish between a "science register" while reading a laboratory report, and a "history register" while reading an account of the Battle of Gettysburg. Register analyses can examine texts with respect to three strands of meanings: *experiential* (or *ideational*), *interpersonal*, and *textual*. In every clause of (written) texts, some kind of human experience is represented, the role relationship

between the reader and writer is enacted, and information in the text can be organized (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010). These three types of meanings, or *metafunctions*, which are made simultaneously in texts, are construed through the notions of field, tenor, and mode, and these register variables combine to describe a specific context of situation (e.g., a high school student writing a laboratory report for a biology course), which suggest sets of appropriate language patterns. In other words, speakers' and writers' linguistic choices are influenced by the context of situation Halliday describes in terms of field, tenor and mode; which, in turn, construe experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 46). Because the three situational variables take on a crucial role in register theory, a detailed description of each is given.

The first register variable, field, consists of the *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* of the text, in addition to the ideas introduced. It refers to the text's content, and how that content is expressed through words such as *participants* (noun groups), *processes* (verbal groups), and *circumstances*, (adverbial and prepositional expressions) (Aguirre-Muñoz, Park, Amabisca, & Boscardin, 2009; Paugh & Moran, 2013). Situations that involve a great degree of assumed knowledge among the interactants are "technical"; the texts derived from these situations have deep taxonomies, or specialized terms (e.g., a graduate-level textbook on second language acquisition). Conversely, texts from "commonsense" situations exhibit shallow taxonomies, or everyday language (e.g., a recipe for grilled cheese sandwiches written for young teens). Field influences the content words of a text, but is not characterized by noun group alone. Often, technical terms include not only nouns but also verbs, acronyms, non-standard syntax, and visuals. In contrast, language in an everyday field consists of common words and standard grammatical structures. In terms of field, learners in academic settings would look at lexical choices, and how ideas are connected within texts.

The second register variable, tenor, refers to the position or tone the writer or speaker of the text takes in relation to the reader (Paugh & Moran, 2013)[6]. The social role relationships between the two interactants is crucial to how the language unfolds. Three different continua determine the tenor of the text: power, contact, and affective involvement. Situations can involve two parties of equal power (e.g., friends) and unequal power (e.g., employer-boss). They can also involve two interactants who have had frequent contact (e.g., spouses) and infrequent contact (e.g., distant acquaintances). Finally, situations can involve two people with high affective involvement (e.g., lovers) and low affective involvement (e.g., co-workers). Depending on where the two interactants fall on each of the three continua, the situation can be classified as informal (i.e. equal power, frequent contact, high affective involvement) or formal (i.e. unequal power, infrequent contact, and low affective involvement). Without question, the roles that the two participants occupy impact how they use language. One of the ways in which linguistic expression is affected is through vocabulary. Words between friends may express attitude clearly, whereas in formal situations, language is more objective. The presence of slangs is also more frequent in informal situations. Furthermore, in situations where both affective involvement and contact are low (e.g., a conversation between neighbors), interaction will not only be brief, but will be characterized by agreement and consensus; whereas with high affective involvement and frequent content (e.g., a conversation between spouses), interaction can last for hours and is likely to be characterized by disagreement and controversy (Eggins, 1994).

The third register variable, mode, is concerned with the role language is playing in an interaction. A text's mode is usually evaluated as taking the form of spoken or

[6] For purposes of illustrating clearly how role relationships influence tenor, this report looks to dialogic discourse.

written discourse. Systemicists recognize and examine two dimensions of mode, *spatial distance* and *experiential distance*, both of which describe the relation between language and situation (Eggins, 1994). The possibility of immediate feedback is central to the spatial distance continuum. At one end of the continuum is a situation where feedback is immediate, and there exists both visual and aural contact (e.g., a conversation between friends); whereas on the opposite end is a situation where immediate feedback is impossible, and aural and visual cues are nonexistent (e.g., writing a book). The second continuum of experiential distance considers the distance between language and the social activity occurring. A situation where language takes an active role in accompanying the interaction (e.g., a card game) is at one end of the continuum; at the other end is a situation where language alone constitutes the interaction (e.g., writing a novel). The end points of the two continua illustrate situations where language would be characterized as either spoken discourse or written text. In typical written language situations, one would expect the involvement of one participant, an absence of face-to-face contact, a use of language as reflection, processes of planning and revising, and formality (Eggins, 1994, p. 55). Looking at the spatial and experiential distances is an effective way of analyzing situations where language is used; it can also give indications in how language is realized in a particular situation.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN DISCOURSES

In a context where the social interaction generates a written text and only a written text, the language realized exhibits some interesting features. Because written language often lacks the turn-taking organization of spoken discourse, it is typically a monologic block. Furthermore, written discourse is context-independent; a reader needs

much background information and contextualization to understand a written piece. As a result, organization usually includes a beginning, middle, and end. Written language also appears polished due to the author being able to craft the text carefully. Unlike spoken discourse, written language tends not to be as flexible in allowing everyday lexis (e.g., slangs) and non-standard grammar (e.g., use of double negatives) (Eggins, 1994). So far, the list of linguistic implications, as impacted by written language situations, is common knowledge to most writing instructors. There are two linguistic features, however, that indicate clear distinctions between spoken and written discourses: *grammatical intricacy* and *lexical density*. To demonstrate these two concepts, two example sentences will be given:

i) I arrived to the movies late because my sister called.

ii) The reason for my late arrival to the movie theater was a phone call from my sister.

While the content, actions, and events are the same, sentence i) exhibits certain qualities of spoken language, while sentence ii) is more representative of written language. Some of the major differences include:

1. Sentence i) comprises two clauses, while sentence ii) has only one
2. Sentence i) is more action-oriented (with action verbs "arrived" and "called"), while sentence ii) is more "being"-oriented (with only one verb, "was")
3. "The movies" in sentence i) has been replaced with the less conversational "the movie theater"
4. There are fewer actors in sentence ii); the "I" and "my sister" in sentence i) has been replaced with the abstract nouns "reason" and "phone call"
5. The actions "arriving" and "calling" have been turned into nouns, "arrival" and "phone call," through a process called *nominalization*

Eggins (1994) provides a succinct summary of the differences between spoken and written language:

> spoken language is concerned with human actors, carrying out action processes, in dynamically linked sequences of clauses, whereas written language is concerned with abstract ideas/reasons, linked by relational processes (verbs of "being"), in condensed sentences. (p. 58)

Spoken language, then, tends to be more grammatically intricate, able to hold more clause complexes per sentence. Written language, on the other hand, tends to be more lexically dense, and is able to pack many lexical items into each clause. Academic registers exhibit most or all of the characteristics of written language, and are discussed in the subsection *Markers of Academic Language*.

Lexical and grammatical choices are at the center of register theory, as seen in the discussions of field, tenor, and mode. Knowledge of these three constructs can provide educators with analytic tools to deconstruct challenging texts with their students and equips learners with the skills to write in school-based genres, which become increasingly "technical, dense, abstract, and complex" with each successive grade level (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010, p. 596). The following chapter considers just how teachers can apply genre and register theories to enhance reading and writing.

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the research on writing instruction under a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framework. Pedagogy derived from SFL can be situated in a variety of contexts to a variety of learners. To emphasize the flexible nature of the approach, papers situated in English language learning contexts, English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL), as well as foreign language (FL) contexts, with participants ranging from grade school to adults, are included. However, because this Report examines ELLs' development of *academic* literacy, articles centered on school-based, or academic, genres are highlighted.

First, the instructional models implemented by these teacher-researchers are examined, followed by a discussion of the text types written in these classrooms. Then, instructors' approaches to feedback and error correction are addressed. In the conclusion of each section, an attempt to interpret the findings for English as a foreign language (EFL) context is made.

THE TEACHING-LEARNING CYCLE

Writing instruction from an SFL perspective focuses largely on the concept of genre, and how "the language structures of a writing task vary with respect to genre" (Brisk, 2012, p. 448). Instructors working under this model teach learners how to differentiate between the writing demands of specific genres, ranging from fictional narrative to persuasive argument. This knowledge is then used to improve students' writing performance in each target genre, with attention being paid to the language that characterizes it.

Pedagogy informed by SFL draws on the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who viewed learning as "mediated and the result of social interaction" (Horwitz, 2013, p. 46). Through interaction with experienced others, including peers, learners are able to move from their current level of performance to the next level (Hyland, 2007; Wertsh, 1991). In these socially-oriented learning interactions, the role of the teacher is crucial. As the experts in the writing classroom, teachers must not only select tasks within the students' zones of proximal development (ZPD)[7], but also scaffold their writing through careful instruction (Hyland, 2004; Hyland, 2007).

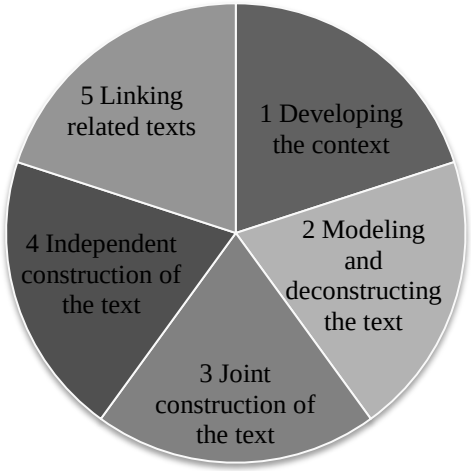

Figure 1: The teaching-learning cycle (Feez, 1998, p. 28, as cited in Hyland, 2007, p. 129)

One widely recognized instructional model for implementing genre-based pedagogy is the *teaching-learning cycle*, developed in Australia in the early 1990s (see Hyon, 1996). Usually represented in the figure of a wheel (see Figure 1), the five-stage

[7] The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the distance between the language learners are able to produce and the language they are able to construct with others' assistance.

framework[8] sees instructors 1) setting the context of the genre, 2) providing a model text for deconstruction, 3) jointly constructing a text with learners as practice, 4) assigning a writing task for students to complete independently, and 5) relating what has been learned to other genres (Hyland, 2007).

The first stage, *developing the context*, raises students' awareness of the purpose of the target genre. In this phase, students are asked to activate prior knowledge and develop an understanding for the social purpose of the writing task. Relating the task back to the learners can deepen engagement and increase motivation.

After building the context, the teacher moves on to *modeling and deconstructing the text*. The purpose of this phase is to discern the generic features of a model text; attention must be given to the schematic structure of the target genre, as well as the language features that help to express the function of each stage.

Next, the teacher engages the class in *joint construction of the text*. Together with the instructor, students apply the hypotheses generated in the previous stages and formulate a new text in the target genre. Learners go through a negotiation process with the teacher, who, as students gain more control, gradually reduces his or her contribution.

Having practiced under the guidance of the instructor, learners then go onto *independent construction of the text*. In this stage, students are given the opportunity to produce a text while experiencing the entire writing process on their own. Independent construction allows teachers to assess students' writing development on an individual basis, and is an important component of all L2 composition classrooms. Read (2010) contends that teachers often "ask students to write in genres or modes of composition without building their prior knowledge of these types of texts" (p. 47). Under the SFL

[8] The oft-cited teaching-learning cycle is often rendered in a five-phase model, though variations do exist in fewer and more stages. For instance, Martin's (2009) version of the cycle excludes the first and fifth stages.

framework, students write independently only *after* considerable teacher-supported learning. Composing on their own, then, may offer a rewarding, empowering experience for these novice writers, and further advance their autonomy.

The final step, *linking related texts*, involves the learner connecting what has been learned to other genres and contexts. They can reflect on how the target genre is similar to or different from previously learned genres, and discuss how these observed linguistic patterns correlate to a text's social purpose. The idea that a writer's choice in language changes depending on the function of the text is foregrounded.

All five stages of the teaching-learning cycle establish context and build shared knowledge, and orient learners to the genre's function in the culture (Martin, 2009). By following this series of sequential steps, teachers simultaneously work with an explicit methodological model that has been proven to be effective and a framework that informs classroom activities. A number of researchers have observed instructors who use the teaching-learning cycle in their classrooms.

IMPLEMENTING THE TEACHING-LEARNING CYCLE

Appropriation of the teaching-learning cycle by educators in American classroom settings has become common in recent years. Read (2010), Ranker (2009), Pavlak (2013), Paugh and Moran (2013), and Brisk (2012) detail accounts of instructors integrating the teaching model into their elementary school writing curricula. In most of the studies, the participants were groups of ESL students, bilinguals, or ELLs integrated with native English speakers, making the findings relevant for EFL instructional contexts.

Read (2010) focuses on two teachers of a fourth grade class who incorporated the model in a genre study on historical fiction (L1 context). The instructors selected and

read aloud children's picture books in the historical narrative genre and, through whole-class discussions, elicited from the students the generic features: first person point of view, past tense, and content grounded in historical fact. Students then toured neighboring historic sites to choose the setting for their own writing. To further support learners linguistically, the modeling stage included lessons on character development, dialogue, and description. These language-focused lessons showcased the importance of verbs used to render characters' actions, and descriptive language used to depict the setting and characters. Though students were creating an original narrative, they were provided with skills necessary for writing descriptions. This newfound knowledge would be of value when the learners encounter more academic writing (e.g., travel brochure or product details). Even composing in genres that are seemingly non-academic can help learners develop academic language. After these language-based lessons, learners jointly constructed a text with the teacher, worked collaboratively with each other in small peer revision groups, and finally created their own stories.

Samples of student writing at various stages showed that learners were moderately successful in producing historical narratives. While learners oriented their stories in time and place and wrote in past tense, they did not write from a first-person point of view, which is considered a key feature of the historical fiction genre the class recognized in the deconstruction stage. The sample materials used by the teachers show a jointly constructed text that showcases the first person perspective, yet learners' final drafts were written in the third person. Perhaps this outcome can be attributed to the "editing checklist" included in the article, which students used in the revision process. With the exception of *Sentences make sense* and *Story stays on topic*, the rest of the checklist focuses primarily on formatting and mechanics: *Name*, *Ending punctuation*, *Beginning capitals*, *Capitals for names*, *Title in the center*, etc. (Read, 2010, p. 50). Thus,

in overly emphasizing surface-level text features, the instructors maybe have missed an opportunity for students to give language-based, function-oriented feedback to each other (see section on *Feedback and error correction*). In other words, while the instructional framework provides teachers with a sequence of steps that are easy to follow, it is still the teacher's responsibility to that each step reinforce the relationships between language and meaning.

The flexibility of the teaching-learning cycle is demonstrated in three recent publications (Paugh & Moran, 2013; Pavlak, 2013; Ranker, 2009), where instructors are seen adapting the methodology to serve the needs of their students. Ranker (2009) gives an account of a first grade teacher who combined language-focused instruction and situated practice in a unit on nonfiction writing. The students, ELLs (Spanish L1 speakers), were tasked with researching on and writing their own books about a chosen animal (report genre). The design of the three-week genre unit resembled the phases of the teaching-learning cycle: an introduction to the nonfiction genre study through read-alouds; a jointly constructed whole-class book on frogs, focusing on language (i.e. sentence construction and use of conjunctions) and organization; and small-group independent research and construction. Throughout the unit, the teacher paired literacy-minded practices (i.e. lessons, writing conferences, discussions, etc.) with meaningful writing tasks. The combination of the two foci produced effective results.

Learners' efforts reflected "the students' speech and the academic language of the books that they were reading," indicating progress towards the written discourse modeled in the jointly-constructed texts (Ranker, 2009, p. 584). They also showed an ability to transfer these skills to a new context through the independent composing process after the unit had ended. Ranker (2010) describes a small group of learners who researched the Titanic and appropriated the information into their own texts. This episode suggests that

learners were able to use a specific literacy practice from the nonfiction unit for a new purpose. As a result of the teacher's effective writing instruction, learners developed their literacy abilities and gained new research and writing strategies.

Recent studies provide even stronger evidence that the SFL model advances ELLs' academic literacy. In Pavak (2013), the teacher of a third grade sheltered English immersion class designed a study of biographies using a genre-based approach. The biographical recount consists of two obligatory stages and one optional one: an orientation situating a historical figure in time and space; an organized chronicling of important life events; and an optional evaluation of that person's contribution to history (Pavlak, 2013). The teacher followed the teaching-learning cycle closely in this genre unit, using activities similar to the ones used by educators in Read (2010) and Ranker (2009). She also made a noticeable effort in bringing the genre's language elements to the foreground. While working with source texts, learners were given strategies to build field (i.e. text topic) with a focus on academic vocabulary. For instance, a read-aloud of a text on Helen Keller yielded discussions on the words "blind, deaf, wild, kicked, scratched, yelled, screamed, and illness" (Pavlak, 2013, p. 408). Students learned to extract key vocabulary words from research to incorporate into their own biographical recounts. In the deconstruction and joint construction phases, consideration was also given to the chronicling of events in the historical figure's life. To further scaffold this organization process, the teacher divided the subject's life into three chunks (early, middle, and later life), and incorporated each chunk back into the teaching-learning cycle. Thus, students engaged repeatedly with modeling, deconstructing, and constructing. The methodological framework seems to be effective when used recursively.

The performances of three students representing low-, mid-, and high-English proficiency were delineated, and their independently composed texts exhibited an

understanding of the essential components of biography writing. All three learners successfully used vocabulary words relevant to the subject and arranged their texts into chronological or thematic sections (e.g., the subject's early, middle, and later life; or parents, home, school, hobbies). Compositions in notebooks revealed that there was "transference of skills from class discussions to independent writing," with learners improving in vocabulary and verb usage, and organization (Pavlak, 2013, p. 410). The teacher's scaffolded instruction over two months resulted in students' development in field building and content organization, skills needed to formulate the language characteristic of biographical recounts.

Paugh and Moran (2013) give an account of an elementary school teacher who made a point to challenge her third grade students to learn academic language. The focal teacher, Mary, combined two complementary social theoretical frameworks, SFL and Critical Pedagogy of Place (CPP), and designed a language arts unit centered on gardening. As CPP is concerned with empowering students to contribute to the well-being of their local environment, Mary had her students prepare and plant their school garden, in addition to visiting neighboring urban gardens. This community-based learning ensured that students would grow socially, but to foster academic growth, Mary looked to SFL.

Mary identified three text types related to gardening which appeared on seed packets: writing that described the plant; writing that attempted to persuade the audience to use the plant for a particular purpose (e.g., cooking); and writing that instructed the reader on how to plant the seeds. Using a teaching framework that resembled the teaching-learning cycle, Mary focused on two academic genres, recount and procedure. The recount required students to retell their experiences visiting and planting in the school garden, while the procedure tasked students with detailing how a planting-related

activity is done (e.g., making compost). Throughout the modeling and deconstruction stage, Mary directed students to the field, tenor, and mode of the texts on the seed packets. She facilitated a discussion on seed packet covers for the carrots the class was preparing to plant by asking, "'What do you notice about the language?'" (Paugh & Moran, 2013, p. 258). Students noticed that the packet included three distinct text types: a section that relayed the history of the carrot (report), a second section that described attributes of the carrot variety (description), and a third section that gave instructions for planting (procedure). The class analyzed each text section through the register variables, guided by the questions *Who, what when, where? What is author/reader relationship?* and *How does text hang together?*. They organized the analysis through a chart that outlined the language used in each genre, and arrived at evaluations that related language use to its function. For instance, for the third text section (procedure), the class noted the following:

- Purpose: Writing to instruct
- Field: Soil, seeds, cold snaps, location, condition of soil, weather
- Tenor: Author is expert, imperative verbs tell you directly what to do
- Mode: Optimum conditions described, steps for planting (soak, sow), commentary includes the suggestion to "wait" (Paugh & Moran, 2013, p. 259)

The jointly constructed chart outlining the language used on the seed packets shows learners' sophisticated awareness of lexico-grammar through register variables. This chart would serve as a valuable reference to the students as they moved on to the writing stages.

During the construction phases, students participated actively in group sharing sessions. Upon listening to a fellow classmate read his recount of cultivating a tomato plant, an ELL offered language-focused feedback, "'in the beginning you started talking

[like] a recount but then at the end…it's starting [to sound] like a 'how to' at the end'" (Paugh & Moran, 2013, p. 263). This incident shows that students had developed the ability to distinguish the discoursal features of different genres. The student who received the feedback revised his draft to better fit the criteria of a recount, using the past tense consistently and presenting a cohesive flow of information. These findings indicate that young learners are capable of recognizing the linguistic elements of text types, and can apply this knowledge to their compositions. Mary's effective execution of a socially- and academically-focused curriculum also reveals that the SFL model can be coupled with other theoretical frameworks such as CPP.

While the teacher in Paugh and Moran (2013) set out to develop her students' overall academic writing skills through the teaching-learning cycle, the focal instructors in Brisk (2012) investigated whether one exemplar of academic writing can develop through a similar instructional model. In a six-month study, third, fourth, and fifth grade instructors, after undergoing an intensive training session on SFL theory, created and taught lessons that focused on the genres of recount, procedure, report, and exposition. One area of concentration was the realization of grammatical persons (first, second, and third) in those genres. In class, the teachers set the context of each genre, modeled and deconstructed texts, and jointly constructed new texts with students.

The results of the study were mixed. Learners were able to write in a variety of genres, and while first, second, and third persons were employed in the writings, appropriate use of the grammatical person was not consistent. Learners also seemed to be confused about the purpose of the writing assignment, either writing in a different genre or mixing genres. The researcher attributes learners' confusion of genres to instructional strategies. For instance, fifth-grade students were assigned an expository essay on saving an endangered species. Conducting research on an endangered animal prompted students

to give an explanation on why the animal was endangered (via the report genre), yet many neglected to use the research as evidence to support why the animal should be protected (using an exposition genre). Students seemed to require more scaffolding on how the research should have been incorporated into an expository essay.

Instructional practices also may have affected students' inconsistent use of grammatical person. During a unit on expository writing, teachers assigned students to write letters. Letter-writing is conducive to creating interaction between the writer and the audience, which calls for the use of first and second persons. This instructional choice may have hindered students' developing control over appropriate grammatical person use in expository writing, which demands composing in the third person. A stronger connection between the teaching of a particular genre and the writing task could have better served the learners. Interestingly, Brisk (2012) posits that a traditional classroom context, where teachers and classmates share ideas and give immediate feedback, "does not support the notion of distance with audience," an important element in distinguishing spoken from written language (p. 464). Writing instruction, then, would benefit from including projects that address a distant audience, such as PowerPoints and posters.

The teaching-learning cycle has not only influenced writing curricula at the elementary school level with native and nonnative English speakers, but also with adult learners in EFL contexts. Yayli (2011) provides an example in a study of six university freshmen at a Turkish university enrolled in an advanced reading and writing course, which used a negotiated syllabus planned around the genres the class wanted to master (e.g., e-mail writing, CV, and essays). For each genre, Yayli, the teacher-researcher, modeled lessons following the teaching-learning cycle. A descriptive analysis of the post-lesson and pre- and post-instruction interviews revealed that learners were used to a process writing approach to instruction, and initially struggled in the course. As it

progressed, students accepted the move-step analysis (i.e. breaking down the schematic structure of each genre), noted the ease with which they acquired later genres, and reported becoming critical readers. An interesting finding was that students exhibited an emerging cross-genre awareness. For instance, one student reported:

> …the structure 'I was wandering [*sic*] if you could' we saw in the formal e-mail samples did not exist in the letter of complaint samples but I still used it in my letter of complaint because the contexts are similar in those genres and you need to use formal language in both of them. (Yayli, 2011, p. 127)

This transfer of knowledge was also alluded to in Ranker (2009), and supports the position that a language-based pedagogy is actually about providing tools for learners to use in any contexts they judge as culturally appropriate.

In another study conducted with adult learners in an EFL setting, Yasuda (2011) investigated to what extent Japanese writers of English developed genre awareness and knowledge, linguistic knowledge and writing competence in a genre-based writing course that incorporated email-writing tasks. The subjects were 70 sophomores enrolled in a 15-week English writing course at a private Japanese scientific university. The homogenous group of lower-intermediate ELLs was taught how to write emails to serve specific social functions (e.g., asking for information, congratulating someone, applying to a job) and involving close and distance relationships (e.g., writing two request emails, one addressed to a professor, the other to a friend). The class examined prototypical models of the genre (along with specific expressions of that genre), completed exercises in pairs or groups, constructed emails independently, and reflected on their performance. Results of surveys, interviews, and pre- and post-tests showed that learners increased their knowledge of genre-specific language choices; improved in task fulfillment and appropriacy, cohesion and organization, and grammatical control; and wrote more fluently. Qualitative evidence also indicated that the students learned to control the

degree of formality when they wrote emails, indicating a better understanding of the Mood system[9], in particular, the use of modality ("I'd be grateful if…"; "Could/Would you…"; "I was wondering if…"; "I'd appreciate it if…"). A rare empirical study, Yasuda (2011) shows that an SFL approach to writing instruction can be used with less proficient foreign language learners.

The SFL model can also be applied to foreign language contexts, as seen in Colombi (2009). In this case study, subjects were American university undergraduates who were heritage language speakers of Spanish. They possessed strong academic skills in English, but their Spanish writing ability was limited. To address these learners' needs, the university adopted an SFL-based curriculum built around thematic clusters of text types, or genres. As is typical of SFL-based pedagogies, a strong emphasis was put on the relationship between the text and its realization at the lexico-grammatical level. The sequencing of the text types across the curriculum moved from interpersonal (informal) to more public (formal) texts, and within each thematic unit, instructors followed a model similar to the teaching-learning cycle. As the learners moved toward more academic, formal genres, their writing exhibited more features of written language, as characterized by the increase usage of grammatical metaphors (*see Markers of Academic Language*).

Applying the Teaching-Learning Cycle to EFL Teaching Contexts

The accounts of educators who incorporated the teaching-learning cycle in their teaching contexts illustrate the adaptability of the model. It can be used with learners ranging from young (Brisk, 2012; Paugh & Moran, 2013; Pavlak, 2013; Ranker, 2009; Read, 2010) to adult (Colombi, 2009; Yasuda, 2011; Yayli, 2011); in first language

[9] The Mood system refers to the grammar of interpersonal meaning, and looks at elements such as clause structures (e.g., declarative, interrogative, imperative), modal verbs, and polarity (is/isn't, do/don't).

(Paugh & Moran, 2013; Pavlak, 2013; Read, 2010), second language (Brisk, 2012; Ranker, 2009) or FL contexts (Colombi, 2009; Yasuda, 2011; Yayli, 2011); and with other theoretical frameworks (Paugh & Moran, 2013; Ranker, 2009). Though two studies involving ELLs in non-English speaking countries were reviewed (Yasuda, 2011; Yayli, 2011), more research on the effects of the teaching-learning cycle in EFL settings is needed. Still, an attempt at drawing implications from the existing body of research for EFL teaching contexts is made.

It has been shown in the research that an SFL perspective on learning is heavily needs-based. Therefore, an early task for instructors is to assess the needs of the learners (Yayli, 2011). This involves EFL instructors evaluating their students' writing competence and keeping in mind the genres of value to their students and their learning contexts. Only after these initial considerations can educators design the curriculum for the period of study.

The following tenets drawn from the pedagogically-driven research are recommended to educators adopting an SFL approach to literacy instruction:

- Tasks administered under the five stages of the teaching-learning framework should connect to the overall purpose of the target genre.
- Academic genres might be better served with assignments that distance the writer and the audience (e.g., posters, PowerPoint presentations) to ensure appropriate use of the third person.
- Genres that appear to be non-academic should not be neglected, for they may serve two purposes: 1) students may want to learn them (e.g., applying to a job via email), and 2) they can still develop academic language.
- When certain genres prove challenging to students, instructors can guide learners through different stages so that learners engage repeatedly with the target genre.

- Throughout the learning process, instructors can make whole-class findings accessible to students at all stages of the genre study, through word walls, charts, lists, etc.
- If the methodology is employed effectively, skills learned in one genre can transfer over to other genres.
- Writing curricula can involve progressions of difficulty (simple to complex) and formality (informal to formal). As learners move from beginning to advanced levels, curriculum designers and instructors can map texts onto existing linguistic and knowledge structures (Crane, 2006).

ACADEMIC GENRES

The previous section on pedagogy derived from SFL theory puts much emphasis on the role of genre in writing classrooms. In examining the role of academic language in the context of schooling, Schleppegrell (2004) provides a table that includes the most common genres taught or written in schools in North America (see Table 1). These prototypical genres are organized into three broad groups: Personal Genres, Factual Genres, and Analytical Genres.

Each of the three categories in Table 1 follows a sequence of development; as learners move from one genre to the next, e.g., procedure to report, they will encounter an increasing demand of academic registers (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 84). In the category of personal genres, *recount* is a reconstruction of personal experiences that is typically written using personal pronouns, "doing" processes (realized through active verbs) in the past tense, and frequent use of additive and temporal conjunctions (e.g., *and* and *when*). Christie (2002) illustrates the grammatical developments that take place as learners move

from writing recounts to complex *narratives*. Analyses of student-produced texts revealed that advanced narratives exhibited better control of references (i.e. pronouns) and Theme[10]; had higher instances of noncongruent realizations and "being" processes (i.e. *to be* verbs); involved elaborate nominal groups; and related more circumstantial information through prepositional phrases and adverbs. Mature writers can pack more information than less proficient writers, and are better equipped to write complex narratives requiring not only a recount of an experience, but drawing implications from the experience (Schleppegrell, 2004).

Genre	Purpose
Personal Genres	
Recount	Retells a sequence of events, drawing on personal experience.
Narrative	Reports and evaluates problematic events and their outcome. Has a complicating action that results in an overall point to the story. Focuses on the action of participants in confronting problems.
Factual Genres	
Procedure	Reports a sequence of events with general participants. Directions and instructions are subgenres of procedures.
Report	Relates a set of facts, using specific statements to back up general ones. Organized by classification or part-whole relationships. Focus on classes of things, rather than individuals.
Analytical Genres	
Account	Adds causal links to a recount; tells why things happened in a sequence.
Explanation	Explains and interprets a phenomenon.
Exposition	Argues why a thesis has been proposed, with more than one argument presented in favor of the judgment. Relies on generalization, classification, and categorization.

Table 1: Some genres of school (adapted from Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 85)

Students often write procedurals in the earlier years of schooling, as described in Paugh and Moran (2013). *Procedure*, a factual genre, "directs the actions of others

[10] *Theme* refers to point of departure for a message. For instance, in the sentence "Mature writers can pack more information than less proficient writers," *Mature writers* is the Theme.

through a set of steps" (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 86). Writers typically compose in the present tense using declaratives or imperatives. Mastery of these skills allows learners to transition easily to writing *reports*, a genre that consists of classifying and describing. In reports, learners utilize timeless verbs in the present tense to make generic references toward a subject, such as an animal (Ranker, 2009). Both these text types ask learners to present factual information free of much personal involvement.

Accounts, explanations, and expositions, on the other hand, are analytical genres that demand analysis and argument. In *accounts*, learners use causal reasoning to articulate what happened and why. Whereas accounts are structured temporally, explanations are not. *Explanations*, where a phenomenon is introduced and explained, are structured logically. A further step is *exposition*, which consists of an argument for a position. As writers formulate more challenging texts, such as expository essays, they draw from a wealth of linguistic resources, realized in expanded nominal groups, greater instances of grammatical metaphor, and better control of Modality[11] (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 87).

The list of genres in Table 1 is not exhaustive, but features the most commonly taught and written text types in schools. They are categorized as *elemental genres* that can be seen and used in larger, more complex *macrogenres* (Hyland, 2004, p. 28). Therefore, students who master an elemental genre can more readily learn a macrogenre that contains the elemental genre. For instance, experienced learners of procedures possess the preliminary skills necessary to create the macrogenre recipe, which is comprised of descriptive and procedural components (Hyland, 2004). Because linguistic awareness of simpler genres can transfer over to more complex ones, a pedagogical

[11] Modality is a subset of the Mood system. It refers to language users' attitude toward what they themselves are saying (modalization) and expression of their judgment and attitudes about actions and events (modulation) (Eggins, 1994).

strategy may be to make certain students' competence in elemental genres before introducing them to macrogenres. Additionally, teaching similar genres in succession may simultaneously scaffold learning and reinforce language features, thus promoting cross-genre awareness (Yayli, 2011).

This notion of teaching similar text types is foregrounded in So (2005), who discusses the possibility of using newspaper genres to teach argumentative essays in an L2 instructional context and shows through comparative text analysis how a newspaper editorial and an expository essay share numerous lexico-grammatical, text organizational and contextual characteristics:

1. Communicative purpose: to express opinions, to evaluate, to make recommendations
2. Schematic structure: an introduction followed by a series of arguments and concluding with a call to action
3. Generalized participants (e.g., *most people* and *students*)
4. Opinions interwoven with facts
5. Language features realizing interpersonal meanings: evaluative lexis, modality, using "we" and rhetorical questions
6. Connectives associated with reasoning (So, 2005, p. 75-76)

Editorials and school argumentative essays are based on two widely different situational contexts; however, there is an overlap of several key language features. The assumption here is that learners may find it easier to relate to the real-life newspaper genre, which serves an actual social function, rather than the school-based essay, which can be viewed as existing in a vacuum. Therefore, incorporating authentic text types into classrooms can occupy a powerful role in writing classrooms.

Academic Genres in EFL Contexts

So (2005) describes a successful appropriation of a real-life genre into an academic learning context. This instructional practice expands the definition of academic genres, which traditionally does not include everyday text types. Effective uses of real-life materials are seen in Paugh and Moran (2013), where young third grade were exposed to the texts printed on seed packets, and in Yayli (2011) and Yasuda (2011), where adult EFL learners studied and formulated e-mails. An SFL approach to writing instruction, with its emphasis on the social purpose of texts, seems particularly suited to incorporating everyday genres into classroom settings. Using recognizable text types helps learners consider the "content, language and context in a meaningful way to determine how one relates to the other" (So, 2005, p. 76). Furthermore, connecting real-life genres to school-based ones encourages students to bring a critical eye to all the texts they encounter inside and outside of school.

Of particular interest is that instructors in Yayli (2011) and Yasuda (2011) featured e-mail writing in their genre-based writing classrooms. This occurrence may be attributed to the fact that e-mail writing, in general, is a less formal way of communication than academic genres, such as expository essays (though e-mails can facilitate the development academic language, as seen in Yasuda, 2011). Because an e-mail involves a specific reader and prompts a response, it typically exhibits language that is closer to speech. In EFL contexts that stress communication through speaking rather than writing, e-mails can serve as a transition between the two modes. Without question, it is the social purpose of the e-mails that instructors must highlight. The social function (genre) of the writing is what primarily dictates the language and organization of the text, not the medium in which the text is written (e-mail).

The topic of e-mail composition relates back to the earlier discussion (see *Introduction*) of Korea's National Exam Ability Test (NEAT), which assesses students' writing competence in addition to speaking, listening, and reading. For students taking the level 3 test (to demonstrate "Practical English" ability), they must successfully complete four writing components, three of which involve specific genres: describing a picture (description genre), writing based on a series of pictures (recount genre), and an e-mail writing task. Level 2 test-takers (demonstrating "Basic Academic English") are required to complete a short expository essay (Jin & Kim, 2011). Certainly, if EFL instructors teach to the test, they will need to discern the generic features of these text types. L2 writing instruction through an SFL perspective lends itself to such teaching and learning goals.

MARKERS OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

In the earlier overview of SFL and review of the pedagogical research on the teaching-learning cycle, several linguistic features were identified that characterize academic registers. This section reports on the lexico-grammatical markers that emerge as learners gain academic writing proficiency and discusses the particular patterns of language used in content-specific texts. Research on SFL-based reading and writing in content areas opens up the possibility of incorporating analysis of discipline-specific language to further scaffold learner's understanding and composing of certain texts. This section concludes with implications on how content-specific language analysis can enrich EFL teaching contexts.

Movement Towards Advanced Academic Literacy

Colombi (2002) and Byrnes (2009), who have worked with SFL to analyze and understand advanced L2 writing, contend that writing development occurs on a continuum. As learners move away from informal conversational registers and toward formal academic registers, their use of language changes. This trend toward academic language takes a similar shape across languages, as substantiated in Colombi (2009), with Spanish FL learners, and Byrnes (2009), with German FL learners. These SFL scholars provide evidence that, as writers advance towards academic language, their compositions exhibit less grammatical intricacy and more lexical density, and contain higher instances of grammatical metaphor (GM).

In a yearlong study, Colombi (2002) analyzed the academic development of Latino students enrolled in a Spanish for Native Speakers course at a California university. She focused on two learners' writings, tracking their use of nominalization and clause combining strategies. Two expository essays from each subject—one written at the beginning of their academic writing course and another written at the end—were examined. Results showed that the students' earlier compositions were more grammatically intricate [12] while their later writings were more lexically dense [13]. Grammatically intricate texts are more typical of spoken language, where speakers "tend to add one thought after the other as they come" to mind, often resulting in long sentences (Colombi, 2002, p. 74). As students became more academically proficient, the language in their texts became more complex by packing more lexical items into each

[12] Colombi (2002) defines grammatical intricacy as the number of main, paratactic, and hypotactic clauses divided by the number of sentences. See *Overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics* for a comparison of grammatical intricacy and lexical density.

[13] Lexical density refers to the number of content carrying words (i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs, and some adverbs) in the text divided by all the words in the text. See *Overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics* for a comparison of grammatical intricacy and lexical density.

clause (i.e. lexical density). The use of nominalizations, in particular, allows for organization of texts in terms of ideas, reasons, and causes (Eggins, 1994, p. 59), which are pertinent to argumentative essay-writing. Colombi (2002) found that the movement from grammatical intricacy to lexical density was slow for these learners perhaps due to instruction not *explicitly* raising students' awareness of the lexico-grammatical features that characterize the exposition genre and academic registers. With explicit pedagogy, then, developing writers may progress faster toward advanced literacy.

Another longitudinal study tracked the writing development of FL learners' writing. Byrnes (2009) observed the emergent L2 German writing ability of university students at Georgetown University's German department, whose curriculum was informed by many principles and models, including SFL. She followed 14 students through three curricular levels, paying special attention to their use of grammatical metaphor (GM)[14]. During curricular levels two through four, students completed genre-based tasks that moved from narrative to academic discourses. Students' writings were coded for instances of GM, and analyzed for fluency, syntactic complexity, lexical density, and grammatical intricacy. As expected, more advanced tasks exhibited a higher word count and a higher degree of syntactic complexity. Also, as learners shifted from a more oral to a more written register, their writings showed less grammatical intricacy and more lexical density. A look at GM occurrences across clauses further reveals that students' use of GM increased by 40% between levels three to four. Byrnes's (2009) findings, along with Colombi's (2002), confirm Halliday's looking to "lexical density,

[14] The most accessible definition of grammatical metaphor is by Eggins (1994), who characterizes it as "situations where meanings typically (congruently) realized by one type of language pattern get realized by other less typical (incongruent) linguistic choices" (p. 63). The term *metaphor* is used because the alternative realization, "in that it plays with and changes the grammar, is a form of metaphor" (Christie, 2002, p. 47).

nominalization, and grammatical metaphor as the main lexico-grammatical characteristics of written language" (Halliday, 1996, as cited in Colombi, 2002, p. 67).

Another marker of academic language, though perhaps a minor one, pertains to the writers' control of grammatical person, realized in the first, second, and third person. In a genre-based writing curriculum, bilingual (Spanish and Vietnamese L1s) elementary school students in grades three through four were seen to gain moderate control of their use of first, second and third persons in various genres (Brisk, 2012). First- and second-person use foregrounds the writer and the audience, thus giving the text an interactional tone. The result is spoken language, where the text, writer, and audience simultaneously share space. In written language, however, the writer constructing the text and the audience reading the text are separated by time and place. This distance between the writer and the audience produces language that foregrounds the topic, while the writer and audience remain in the background. Thus, third person is more typical of written, or academic, language in genres such as historical recount, reports, and exposition (Brisk, 2012).

Learners' writings tend to exhibit more of these academic textual markers as they advance in proficiency. Concurrently, the texts they read and write become more linguistically demanding. In the early years of elementary school (grades 1-3), children primarily "learn to read" through storybooks; but in grades 4-8, they "read to learn" through expository texts (Fang, 2008, p. 476). These more challenging texts "often deal with specialized topics that are different from the typical subject matter reading materials in the elementary grades" (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, p. 4). In recent years, SFL scholars have focused their attention on helping first and second language learners unpack these content-based reading materials through functional language analysis, an approach that "enables students to read closely and critically and develop an

understanding of how language works in different subjects" (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, p. 1). The development of reading strategies in subjects such as science, history, and language arts go hand in hand with learners' advancement in academic writing. When students write in schools, "they are not simply learning 'academic writing'…there are different expectations for writing in each content area" (Kibler, 2011, p. 212). The implication here is that gaining strong academic reading skills in core subjects will translate to better academic writing in those respective disciplines.

The following subsections discuss the manner in which academic language takes shape in discipline-specific contexts. To reiterate, the purpose of describing the lexico-grammatical features of registers specific to content areas is to draw pedagogical implications for L2 writing instruction.

The Language of Science

Much has been written about the academic register of science texts from an SFL perspective (Fang, 2004; Fang, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Kibler, 2011; Mohan & Slater, 2006; Unsworth, 1999). Features of the scientific register go beyond technical vocabulary; scientific language involves highly abstract concepts that are patterned in tightly knit structures. Abstract nouns help scientists "repackage information in ways that enable the development of a theory" (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, p. 23). Thus, everyday language tends to be repacked through nominalizations, creating rather lexically dense texts. To illustrate, in conversations, speakers typically use two lexical items per non-embedded clause, whereas in written language, there may be four to six. In *scientific* writing, this number often exceeds ten (Halliday & Martin, 1993, as cited in Fang, 2004, p. 338). This onslaught of content-

carrying words can challenge readers as they are tasked with constantly unpacking dense language, consisting of nominalizations and complex noun groups[15]. The organization of these expanded nouns often flows in a way that privileges nouns and allows successful building of explanation. The end products usually resemble the following:

> Fishes have eyes that allow them to see objects and contrasts between light and dark in the water as well. The amount of vision varies greatly among fishes. Some fishes that live in areas of the ocean where there is no light may have reduced, almost nonfunctional eyes. (*Modern Biology*, 2006, p. 796, as cited in Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, p. 32)

Functional linguists refer to the underlined portions as *Theme*, the part of the clause that serves as the point of departure for the message. The remainder of the text is called the *Rheme*. The first part of the clause, the Theme, is typically established information; the Rheme is then the point that the writer wants to present. Science authors often repackage information in the Rheme of one clause in a recapitulation, technical term, or nominalization that then acts as the Theme for the following clause, as in the case of "the amount of vision" in clause 2 (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010, p. 595). In summary, features of scientific texts involve technical vocabulary, abstraction, high lexical density, and tightly knit structures.

When high school ELLs (Spanish L1) were asked what scientific writing looked like, they were able to cite specific features, such as "making a point and providing evidence" and describing the steps of scientific experiments; however, none claimed to write in this way (Kibler, 2011, p. 221). It appears that the students' teacher was unable to supply them with the strategies to effectively render a scientific register for their lab

[15] Complex noun groups in science texts are comprised of a head noun with pre- and post-modifiers. An example is "those two tropical rain forest hot spots in South America that have not been completely explored." Head nouns (*spots*) can be preceded only by pronouns (*those*), numerals (*two*), adjectives (*tropical*, *hot*), and nouns (*rain forest*); they can be followed only by prepositional phrases (*in South America*) and embedded clauses (*that have not been completely explored*) (example taken from Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, p. 29).

reports. In order to facilitate the reading and writing of scientific texts, teachers must raise students' awareness of nominalizations; break down technical terms into roots; help learners deconstruct and construct noun groups; and perform Theme/Rheme analyses[16] that highlight texts' organizational structure (Fang, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008).

The Language of History

Beck and McKeown (2001) have reported extensively on students' difficulties in reading history texts. Writings in social studies textbooks, for instance, tend to "provide facts rather than explain information and often [fail] to provide connecting ideas so that the facts [can] be organized into a coherent block" (Beck et al., 1989, as cited in Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 226). Functional linguists have delineated the language features of history texts with the goal of helping learners read and write history (Fang, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteíza, 2004; Schleppegrell & de Oliveira, 2006; Unsworth, 1999). Markers of historical discourse include the interaction of time and cause, the use of abstraction to generalize from historical events, and the interpretation of the historian (Schleppegrell & de Oliveira, 2006). Representation of events as nominalizations, in particular, can prove to be challenging to readers as the presence of human agents as participants is hidden, causing abstract noun groups to relate to other abstract noun groups (Unsworth, 1999, p. 516). Historians favor this kind of language because it allows priority to be given to the events, simultaneously allowing more information to be condensed into a few words

[16] Theme/Rheme analysis examines the Thematic progression of a text. It involves breaking down text into Theme and Rheme components, and diagramming the connections between Rhemes that offer new information and Themes that show a repackaging of that information in the following clause. The Theme/Rheme structure of scientific texts usually follow a zig-zag pattern (Eggins, 1994, p. 303; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008, p. 33; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010, p. 595)

(Schleppegrell et al., 2004). Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) recommend a three-part questioning model to decoding history's dense, abstract language: 1) *How did the author organize the text?* 2) *What is going on in the text?* and 3) *What is the perspective of the author?*

Focusing on the organization of a history text involves examining the Themes of clauses. Often, authors coordinate historical events through the use of Circumstantial information, realized in prepositional phrases and adverbs, as the point of departure for the sentence (e.g., *Over the next decade*…, *When the news of the fighting*…). Analyzing the Thematic structure helps learners see how the ideas are connected. In order to examine the goings on of the text, learners should look to the types of processes presented in each clause. Fang & Schleppegrell (2008) classify processes into four categories[17]: doing (e.g., *destroy*); sensing (e.g., *feel*); saying (e.g., *report*); and being (e.g., *to be*). By scrutinizing the processes, students can better determine when the writer is recounting events (doing processes), describing or defining (being processes), or communicating what historical figures have said, thought, or felt (saying or sensing processes). Finally, learners can scrutinize word choice to determine the author's stance on the subject, or interpretation of the events (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008).

Concentrating on language specific to history texts allows teachers to carefully scaffold learners' knowledge of the discipline. Schleppegrell and de Oliveira (2006) report that classroom interaction centered on unpacking the language of history has elicited meaningful participation from native English speaking students and ELLs.

[17] Functional linguists refer to the six process types described by Halliday: material, behavioral, mental, verbal, relational, and existential (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Fang &Schleppegrell (2008) have adapted these process types for their purposes of elementary and secondary school learners.

The Language of Language Arts

Literary texts come in many different varieties, and do not exhibit consistent patterning of language such as that of texts in science and history. An SFL approach to studying literature goes beyond personal responses and identifying literary devices or figurative language; it involves helping students "connect the language of the text" to the "interpretation of the work" (Lukin, 2008, p. 84). Through a functional linguistic perspective, researchers have examined, for example, the language of poetry (Lukin, 2008), children's picture books (G. Williams, 2000), juvenile fiction (Harman, 2013), and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Hammond, 2006).

G. Williams's (2000) research study showed grade six ELLs studying a well-known children's picture book, *Piggybook* [18] (Browne, 1986). By classifying the processes, participants, and characters' goals in the story, children found meaningful patterns in the language:

> Mrs. Piggott was doing something to something and the other…um…the rest of the family, like Mrs….um…oh, Mr. Piggott and the boys, they were just doing things but they weren't doing things to anything. They didn't have any Goals, they only had…um…Actors and Processes, whereas Mrs. Piggott had Actor, Process and Goal and…yeah. (G. Williams, 2000, p. 125).

These classroom interactions focusing on the grammar eventually led students to discover the message, "'in the beginning…only one person was doing the work and in the end the whole family was helping out'" (G. Williams, 2000, p. 127). This study shows that young learners are capable not only of analyzing literary texts using the metalanguage of functional grammar, but also of making critical connections to the larger theme of the story.

[18] *Piggybook* (Browne, 1986) is about the Piggott family, consisting of a mother, a father, and two sons. The males of the family depend on Mother for everything, and she soon grows tired of it. One day she leaves the menfolk to fend for themselves.

Evidence to support the claim that an SFL approach to reading can advance writing development is seen in Harman (2013) and Hammond (2006). Harman (2013) focuses on the SFL-informed, literature-based instruction in writing of a fifth grade elementary school teacher, Julia. Classroom activities involved students, including ELLs, rewriting passages from literary texts, using the same linguistic patterns. For example, Miguel, a heritage speaker of Spanish, adapted White's (1999) depiction of a barn in *Charlotte's Web* into a description of a prep school. Other writings included reflective expository essays on readings that borrowed the literary texts' lexico-grammatical resources. Thus, a focus on language in the study of literature can help expand learners' use of lexico-grammar in their compositions.

Hammond (2006) gives an account of a high school ESL instructor, Kathleen, who adopted an SFL approach to the teaching of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In addition to focusing on the characters, plot, and dialogue, Kathleen also assigned writing tasks that extended the teaching of language outside the play. One writing activity with which students engaged a news report about a major event in the story (e.g, the deaths of Romeo and Juliet). Instruction centered on the generic structure of a news report and the development of voice of the news writer and characters (offering eye-witness quotes). Another project involved students playing with the language of Shakespeare by shifting the language to a more informal register and then performing it in class. Interweaving the curriculum content with the teaching of and about language gave ELLs the possibility of gaining access to the specialized writings of Shakespeare.

Viewing Academic Language through an L2 Learning Perspective

The *ACTFL* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) *Proficiency Guidelines* define and measure language ability in the four modes: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Where learners at the Advanced level are able to write in informal and certain formal registers, writers at the Superior and Distinguished levels (see Figure 2) can hypothesize, philosophize, analyze, and persuade, moving "beyond the concrete to the abstract" (ACTFL, 2013a). The abstractions that extremely proficient language users are capable of articulating are parallel to the findings of SFL scholars, who characterize advanced writing as highly abstract. If learners want to be Advanced or Distinguished, then their compositions have to exhibit the abstractions typical of academic language. Therefore, explicit teaching of these academic features is crucial if the goal is to foster advanced academic writing.

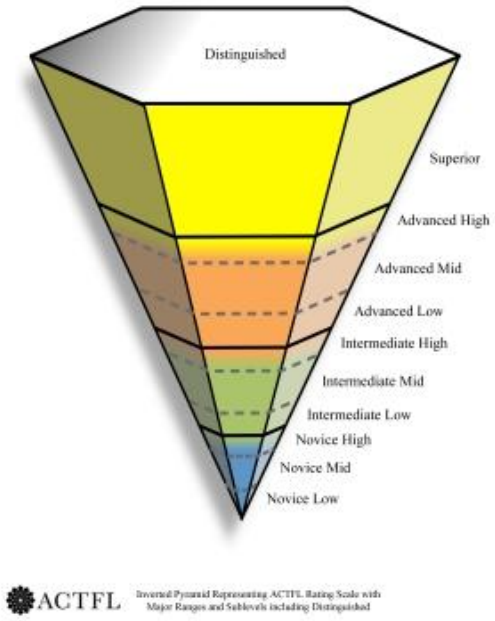

Figure 2: ACTFL proficiency guidelines (ACTFL, 2013b)

Instructors can also consider accommodating functional language analysis into their L2 writing curriculum to improve learners' reading and writing skills in content areas. Teaching writing in an EFL context usually entails the choosing of a topic, as students cannot write when there is no topic to write about. Therefore, reading materials are often brought into L2 composition classrooms. Hirvela (2001) observes, "writing with or from source texts is an act of reading as well as writing, since it is through reading that the required writing material is appropriated" (p. 109). It is natural to then infer that learning how to read well will advance writing ability. The readings selected by instructors may exhibit the dense language of science; the highly abstract nature of the language of history; and the multitude linguistic aspects of literature. Educators knowledgeable in functional language analysis have the metalanguage to lead discussions with their learners on the lexico-grammatical resources of these texts for meaning making, and can subsequently equip L2 writers with the tools to construct similar texts. With explicit instruction of the linguistic features of academic writing, students may be able to progress faster in the direction of advanced academic literacy (Colombi, 2002).

Another pedagogical implication drawn from the literature on academic language relates to the teaching of high-stakes exams. EFL students wanting to attend institutions of higher learning in English-speaking countries are often required to take assessment tests, such as the American GRE (Graduate Record Examination), ACT (American College Testing), or SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test); exams administered by individual schools; and language proficiency examinations, such as the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), or TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). All of these tests involve reading academic texts from such disciplines as science, history, and the language arts. Similarly, the NEAT contains reading passages on history, science, technology, literature,

art, gender equality, economy, etc. (Jin & Kim, 2011). Like the NEAT, a great many of these assessments include a writing component, often in a specific genre. EFL educators tasked with teaching to a test would only benefit from being familiar with the general and discipline-specific academic registers. SFL affords language teachers, and subsequently their language learning students, with the linguistic resources to unpack and construct texts that are challenging even to native English speakers.

FEEDBACK AND ERROR CORRECTION

Learners' development of advanced writing can be partly credited to meaningful and useful teacher responses to students' compositions, and the learners' willingness to accept these judgments and grow from them. Teachers' responses may take the form of feedback or error correction, or both. As SFL scholars have only begun to address these two instructional areas, only a select few articles are discussed in this section.

Feedback

The literature on feedback through an SFL lens is not very different from the guidelines put forth by process-oriented writing scholars, such as J. Williams (2005) and Ferris (2007). Instructors under both frameworks are recommended to:

- leave written comments and questions on students' papers (J. Williams, 2005, p. 104; Yasuda, 2011; Yayli, 2011);
- provide feedback on both content and form (Ferris, 2007; Yasuda, 2011);
- attend to the overall meaning, rather than the grammar in isolation, of the writing (J. Williams, 2005, p. 108; Yayli, 2011);

- use portfolios as a way for students to reflect on the feedback and improve upon earlier drafts (Hyland, 2004, p. 181; J. Williams, 2005, p. 135; Yayli, 2011);
- guide students during peer response sessions (Pavlak, 2013; Read, 2010; J. Williams, 2005, p. 93); and
- conference with students to personalize and tailor feedback (Read, 2010; J. Williams, 2005, p. 114).

Furthermore, teachers who have undergone intensive training in the metalanguage of SFL have reported greater ease in responding to students' texts more directly. In a discussion of this positive change in teacher feedback, Aguirre-Muñoz et al. (2009) write:

> The shift in teacher feedback to students suggests that training in SFL allows teachers to illuminate how a certain academic genre is realized through a group of lexical and grammatical items that characterize it. (p. 316)

From these observations, the researchers foresee two effects that can come from this change. First, teachers can now provide more explicit feedback of genre-specific features of academic language to improve writing skills. Because students and teachers share the same metatalk related to genre and register, which importantly reflects a deeper understanding of how texts work in general, teachers are able to give better feedback, and students are better able to process it (Paugh & Moran, 2013). Second, teachers' responses during the revision process are more likely to "help emerging writers develop their metalinguistic knowledge and in turn help them gain command of academic literacies" (Aguirre-Muñoz et al., 2009, p. 316). This sentiment is echoed by Ferris (2007), whose research has focused extensively on response to student compositions and corrective feedback in L2 language writing, who suggests that instructors "should consider the specifications of the particular task or text type on which students are working" (p. 170).

Schleppegrell and Go (2007) present a well-articulated functional approach to analyzing and giving ongoing feedback on students' writings. The model involves referring to three questions in the process of giving students feedback: 1) *What is the text about?*, 2) *How is judgment/evaluation expressed?*, and 3) *How is the text organized?* (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007, p. 530). Clearly, the three questions refer to the three metafunctions of SFL theory: ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. To illustrate its practicality, the researchers applied this model to a small class of beginning ESL learners composing in the recount genre.

The three questions were designed to be intentionally broad so that teachers can adjust what they are looking for in terms of the writing task at hand. For teachers using the three questions for evaluating a recount, Question 1 refers to types of processes (constructed as verb groups) and participants (constructed as noun groups) in the texts; Question 2 refers to what students describe and the manner in which they report thoughts and feelings (realized in thinking/feeling and describing processes); and Question 3 refers to how students begin their sentences (often with circumstantial information) and how they track participants (using reference cohesion) (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). These guidelines show how an SFL perspective can equip teachers with valuable instructional strategies to responding to student-written texts. Essentially, the teacher-responder goes through the text three times, each time focusing on one aspect of how the learner is making meaning. This approach to analyzing texts capitalizes on the linguistic systems that are in play when language users construct meaning.

Error Correction

Error treatment has been the source of a heated debate in L2 writing, with two figures emerging as the voices of two contrasting camps. Truscott (1996) famously made a case against error correction, arguing that all forms of corrective feedback were ineffective and detrimental to L2 writers. In response to Truscott (1996), Ferris (1999) maintained that there is research to support the positive effects of error treatment. The decade-long controversy generated considerable research in the area of grammar correction in L2 writing classrooms, with most scholars recommending a selective approach to error treatment (J. Williams, 2005). While the issue of accuracy has been extensively discussed by process-oriented writing specialists, SFL scholars have only begun to address this issue.

The literature on SFL-informed pedagogy places a strong emphasis on the complexity of language in writing development, leaving the issue of accuracy largely ignored. The result is that error correction is an area often overlooked in SFL literature. A prime example of this neglect is seen in Brisk (2012), who elaborates on two errors that appeared frequently in the ELLs writings: dropping the *s* marker for plurals, and inappropriate use of articles. However, she goes no further than describing these errors as "common among second-language learners" (Brisk, 2012, p. 459). This attribution is in line with how SFL theorists view errors, that they are a "natural part of language development" (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007, p. 530).

Schleppegrell (2002) contributes the most fully-formed writing on error correction from an SFL perspective. She analyzed science lab reports written by three university ESL students enrolled in a Chemical Engineering course, reported to be the most valuable course in the engineering curriculum as it prepared students for the writing demands of future professional contexts. The lab report, as specified in the syllabus, was

comprised of seven distinct stages: Abstract, Introduction, Theory, Experimental method, Results, Discussion, and Conclusions. When compared to their native-speaking counterparts, the ESL students generated less cohesive texts that often presented a stance that may be inappropriate (e.g., realizing interpersonal or textual meanings contrary to their intentions). Their writings also exhibited grammatical errors typical of ESL writers (e.g., control of articles, count/mass nouns, plural markings, etc.) that distracted instructors from responding. As a result, ELLs who took the course traditionally received lower marks than their native-speaking counterparts. Schleppegrell (2002) reveals that instructors typically give less feedback that focuses on meaning and content to ESL students, opting to make no comments at all, or marking only the grammatical errors. As part of her analysis of these L2 writers' texts, Schleppegrell counted and classified the error types (e.g., word choice/word class errors; verb form/verb tense errors; count/mass noun & article errors, etc.), determined the fluency of the text, and calculated the rate of words per error. The data showed that the focal students had varying degrees of control over all the error categories. Teachers who engage in this task, which even Schleppegrell admits is "notoriously difficult," can identify in what areas students need to improve.

Schleppegrell (2002) then focuses her discussion of the results to a writer who attempted to engage in more elaborate explanations than her two ESL classmates (she wrote 2000 more words than them). An examination of her writing showed that she made many errors in complex constructions (i.e. complementation/modification, comparison) by trying to make complex scientific meanings. Greater frequency of errors, Schleppegrell (2002) argues, involves deeper, yet necessary, linguistic resources that show writers "doing things with language that are important for [the] task, but that call for grammatical resources [the writer] has not yet mastered" (Schleppegrell, 2002, p. 138). This view, again, values complexity and downplays accuracy. She maintains that

correcting students' errors does not make for an effective text. Instead, teachers can direct students' attention to appropriate realizations of register features, which are more important in achieving the purposes of the text. As the more experienced participant in the interaction, teachers can draw on their knowledge base to comprehend the composition. Errors, like mistakes in spoken English, can be overlooked.

Feedback and Error Correction through an SFL Lens

The linguistic tools afforded by functional grammar permit instructors to provide more focused feedback to learners on their writing. The focal teacher in Paugh and Moran (2013) could give her students concrete feedback, such as "Can you use command verbs?" and "Can you write the directions step by step?" in reference to a procedural text (p. 265). Because the texts students write fall into specific genres, teachers can make use of their knowledge of the linguistic resources associated with that genre and direct students' attention to specific areas that need improvement. Therefore, an SFL approach to feedback is almost always goal-oriented advice that students can act on.

On the other hand, how to approach error correction from an SFL perspective is less concrete. Examining SFL scholars' stance on error correction in comparison to process writing researchers' position on error correction may offer some insight. In general, the two theoretical approaches view error correction differently. SFL scholars and process writing specialists do expect errors from students' writings, and they both show reservations about correcting those errors—especially extensively. But their attitudes are fundamentally different. SFL theorists view errors as a mark of language development. Schleppegrell (2002) summarizes this perspective succinctly:

> Development means more errors, and when few errors occur, the writer may be using too cautious an approach. Attempting more complex explanation results in

> more surface errors, as attention needed to monitor the errors is used to focus on making [meaning]. (p. 138)

This viewpoint privileges complexity over accuracy. Process writers, on the other hand, have an end in sight for writers, exemplified by the error-free final draft of any writing task. Perhaps this evaluation is extreme, but it highlights the difference between the two approaches in terms of responding to errors. A more moderate conclusion may be that process writers, in short, do not view errors as a mark of improvement, but SFL scholars do. Both groups, though, recognize that of most importance is each student's writing progress and strategic ability to compose, revise, and edit their own work.

In Table 2, pedagogical implications for an EFL educational setting are drawn. Due to the relatively little research on how SFL theorists deal with errors in student-written texts, the table reflects educated assumptions of their views, using J. Williams's (2005)[19] guidelines for L2 writing instructors as points of departure.

[19] J. Williams's (2005) *Teaching Writing in Second and Foreign Language Classrooms* is an instructional handbook for L2 writing instructors.

Dealing with error correction from a process writing perspective	*Dealing with error correction from an SFL writing perspective*
Indirect methods (e.g., indicate errors but allow learners to figure out what is wrong) are preferable (p. 156).	Guide students' attention to the forms that need improving (e.g., through questions), and have them supply more appropriate grammar forms on their own (Paugh & Moran, 2013; Schleppegrell, 2002).
Learners will acquire only what they are ready to acquire (p. 157).	Scaffold the learning of genres by teaching easier text types before more difficult ones and by following the teaching-learning cycle in sequence.
Learners can benefit from feedback only if they know what to do with it (p. 157).	
Identify whether the learner is capable of self-correcting certain errors (p. 158).	Count and classify learners' errors (Schleppegrell, 2002) and have writers self-correct those errors which they have gained partial control over.
Look for errors that are inconsistent (p. 159).	
Respond to errors that impede communication (p. 159).	Draw students' attention to genre-specific features that impede successful communication, relating errors to the variables in register (field, mode, and tenor).
Pay attention to accuracy throughout the process (p. 160).	Look for complexity in the writing before responding to accuracy. Focus on errors that exhibit inappropriate realizations in lexico-grammar rather than on isolated grammatical errors.
Model the process and provide time for students to practice the process (p. 160).	Model how to incorporate teacher feedback so that learners can do it independently with practice (in the independent construction phase).

Table 2: Interpreting J. Williams's (2005) guidelines for error correction through an SFL perspective

Conclusion

This report has described ways instructors have successfully infused SFL theory into their writing classrooms. SFL metalanguage and analysis skills, in particular, have offered educators: new paths to approaching texts read and written in their classrooms; a deeper understanding of how language is constructed within the content they teach; and a means for assessing students' writing. As a result, learners are able to engage in meaningful and rich conversation about language and content, and are equipped to read and write in school-based genres, thus advancing their academic literacy (Achugar, Schleppegrell, & Oteíza, 2007). Because academic writing is privileged in schools, learners' development of academic language is of major importance. Two of the hallmarks of SFL-based writing instruction are its accessibility to diverse groups of learners, including the underprivileged and underserved, and its adaptability to various contexts.

Pedagogy derived from SFL theory has seen success in various educational contexts, including L1 and L2 (ESL, EFL, FL, and content-based) courses. The focal writers in these classrooms were at different levels of language proficiency, and ranged from elementary students to adult learners. That writing instruction under this framework is used with such a wide variety of learners suggests that its use is not restricted to developing either L1 or L2 literacy. Advanced writing appears to develop in similar ways for all learners and even across languages (Byrnes, 2009; Colombi, 2002; 2009). Schleppegrell (2004) concludes that "both first and second language development seems to follow a similar path" in their evolution from informal to academic writing (p. 111). In conjunction with Schleppegrell (2004), Byrnes (2009) reflects:

> The often puzzling relationship between L1 and L2 literacy might then go beyond general statements about the effects of higher or lower language proficiency or

> higher or lower literacy capacity. Perhaps we have been asking the wrong questions all along. (p. 64)

The broad implication here is that there may be no difference between first and second language literacy. If L1 and L2 literacy develop in similar ways, along the same continuum, then that might explain why, at least through an SFL perspective, a comprehensive L2 writing theory does not exist to this day. The fact that instruction under an SFL framework can effectively serve both first and second language users points to its universal appeal.

One of the goals of this Report was to determine the applicability of the SFL framework to English education in South Korea. Much research on SFL-inspired pedagogy has taken place in L1 and ESL settings, with only a few set in EFL instructional contexts (Yasuda, 2011; Yayli, 2011). Though it appears that SFL theory has much to contribute to EFL education, much more research is needed in order to conclude that SFL-based pedagogy would see success in Asian learning contexts. For one, EFL instruction in Asia has traditionally been focused on teaching towards tests (Gebhard, Chen, Graham, & Gunawan, 2013). Educators in assessment-driven contexts put considerable weight on accuracy, an area that functional linguists do not consistently address. In order for instruction grounded in SFL theory to be welcomed in South Korea, one of two things must occur—either SFL teaching models address error treatment or the education context places less emphasis on accuracy.

The advent of the NEAT exam, which consists of a writing component, marks a shift in the way that Korean educational policymakers view English language use. As its main objective, the NEAT tests examinees' communicative skills rather than their knowledge of grammar. In fact, no grammar items are explicitly tested at all (Jin & Kim, 2011). These new assessment objectives, such as requiring test-takers to formulate

written responses in a given genre, stress the relationship between language and meaning. Methodology under the SFL framework seems ideally suited to expanding students' linguistic resources to construct what they mean. Therefore, instructors tasked with teaching to the new NEAT exam may benefit from training in SFL metalanguage and functional analysis. Besides facilitating students' writing development in target genres, teachers can also help learners deconstruct complex, content-based passages in the reading sections. In order for educators to be well-versed in the theoretical and pedagogical principles of SFL, however, they must become familiar with the framework, preferably through contextualized training.

There has been some research on the effects of teacher training programs informed by SFL. Achugar et al. (2007) describe three professional development contexts in the US where participants engaged in analyzing language through a functional grammar perspective. Teachers of history and ESL participated in these programs to address the increasing number of multilingual classrooms in current educational settings. Participants responded positively to these professional learning contexts, agreeing that this kind of analysis "would help to develop students' metalinguistic knowledge, raise awareness about lexico-grammar and textual resources, and stimulate more critical reading and responses to others' texts" (p. 21). Aguirre-Muñoz et al. (2009) report on a week-long teacher training session with a similar goal, i.e., to address the need for a greater focus on the linguistic structures that characterize academic language. Upon completion of the program, the 21 focal mainstream teachers exhibited greater sensitivity to the strengths and weaknesses of students' writings related to field, mode, and tenor. The researchers tracked the teachers' implementation of explicit academic language instruction in their respective classrooms two to three months following the training, and found two-thirds of the participants were able to successfully apply the learned skills to

their curricula. A third of the instructors did not attempt to implement SFL-based methodology in their classrooms due to the lack of support from their schools. Therefore, in addition to the availability of teacher training, another determiner of SFL's future in South Korea is school environmental factors.

In a recent publication, Gebhard et al. (2013) examine TESOL master's degree candidates' use of SFL and genre-based pedagogy to design curriculum and instruction. Two of the case studies centered on EFL teachers from Asian countries—Taiwan and China. Both learned SFL metalanguage and genre-based pedagogy without difficulty, finding them neither too challenging nor too theoretical. Though the two instructors from Asian countries agreed that a meaning-oriented approach to grammar might be beneficial to their students, they ultimately determined that it was unlikely for them to implement these teaching practices to their respective classrooms in Asia, where testing and time pressures limit their ability to analyze model texts critically in relation to purpose and audience. The researchers concluded that SFL and genre theory is "a system in which the goals of language learning and teaching are paradoxically displaced by assessment systems that reward efficiency and formal accuracy" (Gebhard et al., 2013, p. 122). Therefore, in order for SFL-informed literacy practices to find a place in traditionally assessment-driven instructional contexts such as South Korea, the educational environment must be ready to accommodate such new approaches.

It has been made evident that writing instruction rooted in SFL theory has the potential to advance ELLs' academic literacy. The instructional framework allows for carefully scaffolded learning of academic genres, a necessity for students aiming to succeed in schools. English language education in South Korea appears to be shifting its focus from traditional grammar to a functional language perspective. With a successful

release and implementation of NEAT in 2016, EFL education in South Korea will likely be ready to welcome the meaning-oriented pedagogy afforded by SFL.

References

Achugar, M., Schleppegrell, M. J., & Oteíza, T. (2007). Engaging teachers in language analysis: A functional linguistics approach to reflective literacy. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, *6*(2), 8-24.

Aguirre-Muñoz, Z., Park, J. E., Amabisca, A., & Boscardin, C. K. (2008). Developing teacher capacity for serving ELLs' writing instructional needs: A case for systemic functional linguistics. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *31*(1-2), 295-322.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2013a). ACTFL proficiency guidelines 2012. Retrieved from http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2013b). [Graphic illustration Inverted Pyramid Representing ACTFL Rating Scale with Major Ranges and Sublevels including Distinguished]. *ACTFL proficiency guidelines 2012: English*. Retrieved from http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012/English

Bachman, L. F. (2013, Apr 10). NEAT to have positive impact on English learning. *The Korea Times*. Retrieved from http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/08/181_133721.html

Baker, C. L. (1995). *English syntax* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. B. (2001). Inviting students into the pursuit of meaning. *Educational Psychology Review, 13*(3), 225-241.

Brisk, M. E. (2012). Young bilingual writers' control of grammatical person in different genres. *The Elementary School Journal*, *122*(3), 445-468.

Browne, A. (1986). *Piggybook*. London, UK: Julia MacRae Books.

Byrnes, H. (2009). Emergent L2 German writing ability in a curricular context: A longitudinal study of grammatical metaphor. *Linguistics and Education, 2009*, 50-66.

Choi, I.-C. (2008). The impact of EFL testing on EFL education in Korea. *Language Testing*, *25*(1), 39-62.

Christie, F. (1999). Genre theory and ESL teaching: A systemic functional perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, *33*(4), 759-763.

Christie, F. (2002). The development of abstraction in adolescence in subject English. In M. J. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second language: Meaning with power* (pp. 45-66). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Christie, F., & Misson, R. (1998). Framing the issues in literacy education. In F. Christie & R. Misson (Eds.), *Literacy and schooling* (pp. 1-17). London, UK: Routledge.

Colombi, M. C. (2002). Academic language development in Latino students' writing in Spanish. In M. J. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second language: Meaning with power* (pp. 67-86). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Colombi, M. C. (2009). A systemic functional approach to teaching Spanish for heritage speakers in the United States. *Linguistics and Education*, *20*, 39-49.

Colombi, M. C., & Schleppegrell, M. J. (2002). Theory and practice in the development of advanced literacy. In M. J. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second language: Meaning with power* (pp. 1-19). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Crane, C. (2006). Modelling a genre-based foreign language curriculum: Staging advanced L2 learning. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 227-245). London, UK: Continuum.

Eggins, S. (1994). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. London: Pinter.

Fang, Z. (2004). Scientific literacy: A systemic functional linguistics perspective. *Science Education, 89*(2), 335-347.

Fang, Z. (2008). Going beyond the fab five: Helping students cope with the unique linguistic challenges of expository reading in intermediate grades. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *51*(6), 476-487.

Fang, Z., & Schleppegrell, M. J. (2008). *Reading in secondary content areas: A language-based pedagogy*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Fang, Z., & Schleppegrell, M. J. (2010). Disciplinary literacies across content areas: Supporting secondary reading through functional language analysis. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *53*(7), 587-597.

Ferris, D. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing, 8*(1), 1-11.

Ferris, D. (2007). Preparing teachers to respond to student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *16*, 165-193.

Gebhard, M., Chen, I.-A., Graham, H., & Gunawan, W. (2013). Teaching to mean, writing to mean: SFL, L2 literacy, and teacher education. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *22*, 107-124.

Gebhard, M., & Harman, R. (2011). Reconsidering genre theory in K-12 schools: A response to school reforms in the United States. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *20*, 45-55.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

Hammond, J. (2006). High challenge, high support: Integrating language and content instruction for diverse learners in an English literature classroom. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *5*, 269-283.

Harklau, L. (2002). The role of writing in classroom second language acquisition. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *11*, 329-350.

Harman, R. (2013). Literary intertextuality in genre-based pedagogies: Building lexical cohesion in fifth-grade L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *22*, 125-140.

Hirvela, A. (2001). Connecting reading and writing through literature. In D. Belcher & A. Hirvela (Eds.), *Linking literacies: Perspectives on reading-writing connections* (pp. 109-134). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Horwitz, E. K. (2013). *Becoming a language teacher: A practical guide to second language learning and teaching* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Hyland, K. (1990). A genre description of the argumentative essay. *RELC Journal*, *21*(1), 66-78.

Hyland, K. (2004). *Genre and second language writing*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *16*, 148-164.

Hyon, S. (1996). Genre in three traditions: Implications for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, *30*(4), 693-722.

Jin, K.-A. (2012, Sept 25). Will new English test facilitate communication in the classroom?. *The Korean Herald*. Retrieved from http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20120925000720&cpv=0

Jin, K.-A., & Kim, S. J. (2011). *National English ability test* [Powerpoint slides]. Retrieved from http://www.britishcouncil.org/accessenglish-conferences-new-directions-assessment-and-evaluation-list-of-presentation.htm

Johns, A. (2003). Genre and ESL/EFL composition instruction. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 195-217). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kibler, A. (2011). "I write in a way that people can read it": How teachers and adolescent L2 writers describe content area writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 20,* 211-226.

Leki, I. (2001). Material, educational, and ideological challenges of teaching EFL writing at the turn of the century. *International Journal of English Studies, 1*(2), 197-209.

Lukin, A. (2008). Reading literary texts: Beyond personal responses. In Z. Fang & M. J. Schleppegrell (Eds.), *Reading in secondary content areas: A language-based pedagogy* (pp. 84-103). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Martin, J. R. (2009). Genre and language teaching: A social semiotic perspective. *Linguistics and Education, 20,* 10-21.

Mohan, B., & Slater, T. (2006). Examining the theory/practice relation in a high school science register: A functional linguistic perspective. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5,* 302-316.

Oh, K.-W. (2013, July 3). New state English test shows glitch, faces criticism. *The Korea Herald*. Retrieved from http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130703000968

Paugh, P., & Moran, M. (2013). Growing language awareness in the classroom garden. *Language Arts, 90*(4), 253-267.

Pavlak, C. M. (2012). "It is hard fun": Scaffolded biography writing with English learners. *The Reading Teacher, 66*(5), 405-414.

Read, S. (2010). A model for scaffolding writing instruction: IMSCI. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(1), 47-52.

Ranker, J. (2009). Learning nonfiction in an ESL class: The interaction of situated practice and teacher scaffolding in a genre study. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(7), 580-589.

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2002). Challenges of the science register for ESL students: Errors and meaning-making. In M. J. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second language: Meaning with power* (pp. 119-142). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schleppegrell, M. J., Achugar, M., & Oteíza, T. (2004). The grammar of history: Enhancing content-based instruction through a functional focus of language. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(1), 67-93.

Schleppegrell, M. J., & de Oliveira, L. C. (2006). An integrated language and content approach for history teachers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5*, 254-268.

Schleppegrell, M. J., & Go, A. L. (2007). Analyzing the writing of English learners: A functional approach. *Language Arts*, *84*(6), 529-538.

So, B. P. C. (2005). From analysis to pedagogic applications: Using newspaper genres to write school genres. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *4*, 67-82.

Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning, 46*(2), 327-369.

Unsworth, L. (1999). Developing critical understanding of the specialised language of school science and history. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *42*(7), 508-521.

Wertsh, J. V. (1991). A sociocultural approach to socially shared cognition. In L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine, & S. D. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on socially shared cognition* (pp. 85-100). Washington, DC: American Psychology Association.

White, E. B. (1999). *Charlotte's web*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Williams, G. (2000). Children's literature, children and the uses of language description. In L. Unsworth (Ed.), *Researching language in schools and communities: Functional linguistic perspectives* (pp. 111-129). London, UK: Cassell.

Williams, J. (2005). *Teaching writing in second and foreign language classrooms*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Yasuda, S. (2011). Genre-based tasks in foreign language writing: Developing writers' genre awareness, linguistic knowledge, and writing competence. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *20*(2), 111-133.

Yayli, D. (2011). From genre awareness to cross-genre awareness: A study in an EFL context. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *10*(3), 121-129.